



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

# Pre-K Teaching Times

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## Assessment

During the second semester, teachers using WSS should be observing, recording observational notes and matrices, taking photos, collecting work samples, and filing weekly. Be sure that photos include descriptors and that all notes, photos, and work samples are labeled with the child's name, date, and related domain. Matrices should be labeled with name, date, related domains, and predictable skills and/or behaviors.

WSO teachers should continue to observe and record brief observational notes; enter work samples like notes or pictures; upload photos; and complete matrices (either as a note online or file in teacher file) a minimum of once a week. Classify these at all three levels – domain, functional component, and indicator. Ensure matrices are labeled with name, date, related domain, and predictable skills and/or behaviors if they are not uploaded as a note.

Review this documentation during weeks 10 to 12 and weeks 16 to 18 to complete your ratings. WSO teachers must remember to finalize your ratings.

Periodically review spreadsheets and checklists

to determine gaps in indicators. Assign small groups based on the areas you reviewed and purposely plan an assessment activity that will provide you with the needed documentation.

During the last two to three weeks of school, you will review and give Final Ratings. WSS teachers using the spreadsheet should transfer ratings to the Developmental Checklist in ink while WSO teachers will complete the final Spring Rating on the WSS Developmental Checklist online. This checklist should be printed and placed in individual portfolios. Unless a child only recently enrolled, there should be no notations of "Did not observe" or non-rated indicators.

Parent conferences should be scheduled toward the last week of school during which time you will review the Progress Report or Narrative Summary Report with the parent and obtain their signature. If you are unsure how much detail to put into the progress reports/narrative summary reports,

remember to be factual, positive, and professional.

Be specific, using the child's name and give examples. Be descriptive and paint a clear picture of the child's level of performance. Be positive and use language that is respectful of the children and families. For parents who do not attend conferences, prepare the appropriate documentation and **mail the final progress report by a traceable means.**

During the last week of school, gather all portfolio contents from the fall and spring semesters. Discard/shred the observational notes and matrices.

File the final copy of the WSS Developmental Checklist/WSO Developmental Checklist with student ratings along with the final copy of the PK Progress Report/Narrative Summary Report. The final copy of the PK Progress/Narrative Summary Report should be given to the director to transfer to kindergarten programs.

Give families copies of work samples, photos, and the parent copy of the Progress Report during the parent conferences.

Call the BFTS office and Pre-K Consultant on duty at 404-656-5957. Pre-K Consultant contact information also can be found on the website. [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)

Refer to your IQ Guide for Assessment – Work Sampling System or Work Sampling Online for Reporting Period 2 (Spring). Another great resource is the FAQ for IQ Guide for Assessment Work Sampling System or Work Sampling Online.

You may be wondering, “How can we gather, file, and enter all this assessment data on students? There are only so many hours in a day.

The following management tips were provided by an experienced teacher:

*At the beginning of the year, I take a calendar and mark off each six weeks. I also make two copies of the content standards, one for each rating period. As I teach and gather*

*documentation on the content standards, I check off the standards that are completed and note if I have a matrix, observational note, picture, or work sample. By the time I have to rate each a child, I know which content standards are completed to review for rating the checklist. I select four to five indicators a week to focus on with all children. I try to match those that are similar or that align. I can then document the indicators with notes, pictures, matrices, or work samples. I may only have one piece of documentation for each indicator with some children, but for other children, I may have several items of documentation depending on*

*the student and the indicator. By selecting four to five indicators a week, by the first rating period I will have covered about a third of the indicators so that by the end of the semester, I have rated all 55 indicators and have ample documentation to rate my students.*

## Promoting Higher Concept Development in Your CLASSroom

Effective concept development strategies and questions help children obtain a deeper understanding of concepts and develop analytical thinking skills. Children learn more and understand concepts better when teachers provide opportunities for them to analyze and problem solve rather than just memorize and recite facts. Concept development strategies also contribute to children’s interest in exploration and ability to apply knowledge to the real world.

- Focus on understanding concepts. Challenge children to think about the how’s and why’s of learning. Focus their attention on the process of generating solutions to a problem rather than just getting the correct answer.
- Encourage the use of analysis and reasoning. Use instructional strategies that focus on critical thinking, such as sequencing, comparing and contrasting, and problem-solving activities.
- Promote the exploration of concepts. Ask children to predict, experiment, and brainstorm as ways to explore concepts

and expand approaches to learning.

- Link concepts across activities. Purposefully choose learning activities, within a given day and across weeks and months that focus on similar concepts. Make clear connections among these concepts for your children so that their knowledge and understanding can be generalized and flexibly applied in different solutions.
- Apply concepts to the real world. When explaining a concept, use examples that are occur in children’s lives and encourage them to add their own examples.

Take time to plan for concept development. While you are putting together your lesson plans for the week, think about how you might embed more concept development into your lessons. Develop questions or activities that will stimulate the children to think deeply and understand concepts more fully.

## Up, Down, and All Around in Pre-K

Geometry is the area of mathematics that involves shape, size, space, position, direction, and movement and also describes and classifies the physical world. Spatial sense helps give children an awareness of themselves in relation to the world around them. Spatial concepts define the relationship between children and objects in their world and the relationships of objects to each other.

As you help children learn about the world around them, early spatial concepts such as *in front of*, *behind*, *top*, *bottom*, *over*, *under*, *last*, *between*, *farthest*, *backward*, *in*, *on*, *up*, *down*, etc. help give them a better understanding of directions; ask detailed questions; and express their ideas to others. For young students, an awareness and understanding of spatial concepts and relationships usually predict later success in math, reading, and following directions.

Four year olds are natural explorers. Positional words such as *on*, *under*, *beside*, and *behind* help young children explore and understand their world. To build on their natural curiosity, integrate learning activities about positional words into games that are engaging and hands-on. Following are ideas for suggested activities. As always, to help build a lifelong love of learning, make math fun!

- **Chair Directions:** Have the children sit in a half circle on the floor. Place an empty chair in the open space of the half circle. Have flash cards with positional words on them. Using the chair and the flash cards, demonstrate to the children different positions and the words that describe them. After the demonstration, allow one child at a time to position themselves or a stuffed

animal in relation to the chair, e.g., "beside the chair." Ask the other children to identify the position of the child or stuffed animal in relation to the chair.

- **Hide a Teddy Bear:** Use a teddy bear to practice positional words with the children. Hide the teddy bear somewhere around the room. Ask the children to find him. When they find him, they have to use positional words to describe where they found him (e.g., "behind the plant.") Let the children take turns hiding the teddy bear in different spots and in different positions. This activity allows everyone to have a chance to hide him and find him, giving everyone practice in saying what position he is in and in putting him in different positions.
- **Look and Find:** Practice positional words with your children using the look-and-find game. Have the children sit in a circle where they have a good view of the room. Begin the game by describing to the children where an object is located in the room by using a positional word they have been learning. Then have them look around and tell you where it is. For example, you might say, "Look for a box on the table." Let the children find a few of the objects, then let them take turns using positional words to give the clues.
- **Matching:** Playing an old-fashioned matching game can help young children improve their skills with positional words. Put pictures showing examples of the positional words up on the whiteboard or a chart. Hand a flash card of a positional word

to the children, and let them take turns matching the words with the pictures. The pictures can be of anything, as long as they are clear representations of a positional word. For example, you can use a picture of a cat sleeping "on" a table or a child hiding "behind" a tree.

- **Hula Hoop Game:** Have children manipulate hula hoops to learn positional words. Provide even more fun by playing music during the game. Demonstrate how to play by giving instructions that use positional words. For example, show the children how to step inside the hula hoop and how to step outside again. Ask the children to hold the hula hoops up in the air, place the hoops down on the floor, place the hoops behind them, and place the hoops beside a friend.
- **Vacation Pictures Game:** Let the children make believe that they are on a beach vacation. Ask the children to pose for vacation pictures. For example, tell the children to hold a pretend beach ball, "over" their head, place a towel "down" on the sand, hold a shell "up" to their ear, and run "out" of the cold water.

## Science

April includes several days that focus on our planet and the environment and provide themes for your Pre-K class.

**EARTH DAY**, Sunday, April 22, 2012, focuses on maintaining a clean planet. Celebrate Earth Day Week by **Recycling**, **Reusing**, and **Reducing** (The 3 R's) materials in our environment.

Jack Johnson, who created the music for the movie *Curious George*, uses his acoustical guitar to engage children in a delightful way. Introduce your students to Jack Johnson's 3 R Song on YouTube at: [www.youtube.com/watch?V=USM2riAEX4U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?V=USM2riAEX4U). The lyrics can be found at: [www.sing365.com/music](http://www.sing365.com/music).

Another great website for ideas, information, and inspiration to "Go Green" is found at <http://greenguideforkids.blogspot.com>

**ARBOR DAY**, April 27, 2012, is a nationally celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and care. Arbor Day was founded by J. Sterling Morton in 1872; it is celebrated on the last Friday in April. Visit [www.arborday.org/arborday/classroom.cfm](http://www.arborday.org/arborday/classroom.cfm) for ideas on ways to celebrate Arbor Day in the Classroom.

### Children's books related to Earth & Arbor Day:

*Are Trees Alive?* by Debbie Miller

*City Green* by Dyanne Disalvo-Ryan

*Tell Me Tree: All About Trees for Kids* by Gail Gibbons

*The Tree Book for Kids and Their Grown-ups* by Gina Ingoglia

*Earth Book for Kids: Activities to Help Heal the Environment* by Linda Schwartz

*The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

*One Small Square Backyard* by Donald M. Silver

### Recycling PLASTICS

The recycling symbol, represented by a triangle of arrows with a numeral inside the triangle, is always located on the bottom of plastic containers. Most cities accept plastics labeled #1 or #2 for recycling.

### Recycling ALUMINIUM:

Did you know ALUMINUM can be used, recycled and usually returned to store shelves within 60 days after it has been used? Look for recycling centers near you by visiting: [Earth.911.com](http://Earth.911.com)

### April Focus for Pre-K Science

#### Content Standards

**SD 2: Children will acquire scientific knowledge related to Life Science.**

**SD2e: Children will participate in activities related to preserving the environment.**

#### Activity:

##### Family Home Survey:

Procedure: Explain and discuss recycling concepts to the children. Explain that you want them to help their families complete a survey. Create a survey on home recycling habits. Some questions to consider including:

1. Do we recycle aluminum cans? (soda containers)
2. Do we recycle plastic containers? (Used water bottles, plastic bags, for example)
3. What items do we use many times before throwing away?
4. Do you know what the recycle symbol for plastics looks like?
5. Can we consider using reusable fabric bags at the grocery store?
6. Did you know that tossed plastic bottles that are not recycled could circle the globe eight times?

Children can draw a smiley face for a yes and a flat face for a no. When returned, graph the results of the survey for your classroom!

### Changes to the Learning Environment:

**Dramatic Play:** Change the Dramatic Play or Practical Life area into a Recycling Center. Provide pictures of recycling centers for ideas. Ask children to brainstorm what the center should look like and include and record the ideas generated by children. Suggestions to help children: Labeling of containers, decide what you want to collect (newspaper, soda cans, plastic are simple to start with), and signs for your recycling center

### Art Center: Items Re-used to make Art:

Use items brought in for the recycling containers to create three-dimensional sculptures. Encourage the children to use their imaginations to create whatever they want with soda cans, shoe boxes, bottles, etc... Examples: a transformer, robot, person, building, or animal.

**Writing Center:** Create rebus cards (word cards with pictures of the item to assist in recognition) for the Writing Center. Possible ideas: Paper, cans, plastic, trees, recycle, clean, Earth, arbor, day.

**Science Center:** Create a leaf matching game with leaves from your area, e.g., pine needles, maple, red/white oaks, birch, sycamore, and tulip poplars. Trace the leaves on paper and label them. Cover the real leaves in plastic shelf paper to prevent breakage as children manipulate the leaves. Allow children to match shapes and discuss new vocabulary words and shapes/forms that describe the leaves.

## Pre-K Teaching Times

### Science, *continued*

**Enrichment:** If possible, schedule a field trip to a local recycling center or plant/tree nursery. If you cannot visit one of these locations, arrange for someone representing a recycling center or nursery to visit your classroom.

#### Additional Ideas for April: Experiments!

**When conducting an experiment, remember to allow children to predict what might happen in the experiment. Were they correct?**

**Have you ever created a...**

- **Raisin Rising** – Pour clear carbonated water into a clear glass. Drop four to five raisins into the glass. Discuss with the children what makes the raisins rise and fall (air bubbles).
- **Mini Ocean** – Fill a clear plastic liter bottle  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with water. Add blue food coloring; then add cooking oil. Leave approximately 1 inch at the top of the bottle unfilled. Explain how the oil and water do not mix. Tilt the bottle back and forth to create an ocean wave effect.
- **Run Away Pepper** – Sprinkle black pepper over the top of a cup of water. Put a dab of liquid soap on your finger and touch the center of the pepper. Discuss how the soap repels the pepper to the side of the glass.
- **Invisible Ink** – Using a cotton swab or paint brush, let children write messages or paint designs on white typing paper with lemon juice. Let dry. Then you or another adult hold the paper close to a light bulb until the writing or design becomes visible by turning brown.
- **Ice Magic** – Fill a glass with water and add one ice cube. Let the children lay a piece of string across the top and try to pick up the ice with the string. Sprinkle a little salt over the ice cube, together count to 10 and have the children try it again. Explain how the salt melted the ice just enough to bond to the string.

## Social Studies

Concepts for social studies seem to be a difficult area to cover for some teachers. First, remember that social studies is found all around you. Social studies is about the immediate environment, the community that surrounds your class, technology, faraway places and even role playing to name a few.

Social studies concepts are not found only in topics that you teach but can be found throughout your classroom. Use your class' learning centers to their maximum potential. Place materials relating to social studies concepts in the learning areas or go one step further and make over the

center areas. Consider choosing a theme and "remake" the entire class with every learning center area relating to the theme. For example, create a Pre-K **Town!** Make the block area a construction shop; the language and literacy center a post office; the dramatic play area a doctor's office, etc... While implementing this theme, invite community helpers to visit your classroom and talk with the children about the role they play in the community.

Students can even be exposed to social studies concepts when learning about their classmates. Invite parents to visit

and talk about their cultures, the food they eat, clothes they wear, the country in which they were born, etc... Social studies provides special opportunities to ensure that every student feels special. What a great way to teach children we are the same in so many ways while remaining unique.

Don't allow social studies concepts to worry you; have fun with the subject and use items and situations in your classroom and community to teach valuable lessons.



## Literacy and Kindergarten Transition

Kindergarten readiness is a widely discussed topic, and it is important to realize how many things Pre-K teachers do to prepare our students for their new adventures in kindergarten. All year we work to prepare our students emotionally, socially, physically, and academically for kindergarten. By April, a Pre-K child feels safe and confident at school; can talk about a problem with a friend; can ask for help; has self-help skills; and has an enormous amount of new academic knowledge. They have come so far, so how can we help them take the last few steps?

Many challenges await them in kindergarten. Following are some ways to scaffold the final stage of the transition:

- Create a KWHL chart about kindergarten to identify what they know and where their questions and insecurities lie.
- Use a Venn diagram of Pre-K and kindergarten to represent how many things are the

same and different.

- Create a child drawn picture timeline of a Pre-K day and a 'would be' kindergarten day and compare. This is a great way for children to work together on a team or in pairs.
- Write a class story with rebus cues about your class mascot on his/her first day of kindergarten. Focus on the challenges the mascot might face.
- Set up a lending library of kindergarten transition books such as:
  - *I Want to Go to School Too: A Story about Kindergarten* by Liza Alexander
  - *If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff
  - *When You Go to Kindergarten* by James Howe

- *Kindergarten Rocks!* By Katie Davis
- *Froggy Goes To School* by Jonathan London
- *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen

- Create "take home" literacy packets for the children to complete at home. Ensure that the activities are hands-on, and encourage parents to help their child with the activities. The packets could include: file folder games; books to read and draw about; locating items of different shapes at home; and creating a picture or list of different shapes.
- For more ideas visit the DECAL website at <http://www.decgal.ga.gov/Prek/TransitionToKindergarten.aspx>

## Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the understanding that speech is composed of a series of sounds or phonemes. The easiest phonemic awareness tasks for children are rhyming words or recognizing rhymes. Blending phonemes and syllable splitting (segmenting the beginning sound from the remainder of the word) are intermediate skills. The most difficult phonemic awareness tasks involve completely segmenting the phonemes in spoken words and manipulating phonemes to form different words.

### Activity: Initial Sounds Switch

(This activity promotes phonemic manipulation.)

Generate a list of several words, for example: *hand, hit, well, mad, funny, bun, bend, rat, rope*.

Tell students to make new words by replacing the first sound in each word that you say with /s/. Pronounce each word and then allow time for the students to speak the new word.

Once students have mastered this skill, repeat the activity but this time ask students to replace the consonant sounds, e.g., replace the last sound in

man with /p/ = map.

### Activity: Sound Switcheroo

(This activity promotes phonemic manipulation.)

Say a word. Tell students to listen carefully to all sounds in the word. Then switch one of the sounds in the word, either the beginning, middle, or ending sound. Ask students to tell which sounds were switched. For example, if you say mat and then sat, students should be able to tell that the /m/ was switched with /s/. Try the activity

with the following words:

man/pan  
fan/fat  
run/sun

ball/bell  
van/ran  
hat/hot

fish/dish  
gate/game  
cup/cap

pick/pack  
hot/hop  
pig/pin

## Small Group Writing in Pre-K

Small group instruction allows Pre-K teachers to focus on individual children's needs. Pre-K teachers work with 2-8 children to experiment with materials and solve problems, while other children may work independently on an assigned task. Teachers can make small group decisions based on assessment information obtained on the WSS Developmental Checklist/GSU Spreadsheet or on the Class Profile/Class Ratings Report for WSO participants. Small group composition should change frequently. This does not mean changing daily; once or twice per period, however, is not often enough. Many teachers find that changing each week works well. If you are basing your groups on the needs and interests of the children, this will happen naturally.

Small group instruction is designed to introduce, re-teach, or extend learning on a needed skill or concept to a small group of children. The small group activities should be determined by what you need to know about your children. When you select content standards to code your small group activities, think about the main skill or concept you want to teach; then plan activities that are relevant and purposeful to the skill you are teaching.

Children in Pre-K are at different stages of writing development. Rather than asking children to copy letters or words, provide writing opportunities that are varied and meaningful for the children. Writing progresses in stages from scribbles, to random letter formation, to drawing pictures to represent ideas, and to copying words. Following are activities for writing in small groups:

- Write letters and words in sand, salt, finger paint, non-toxic shaving cream, or Ziploc bags of hair gel. LD 6 a
- Laminate postcards and use wipe-off markers to write messages to friends or family members. LD 6 c
- Place a magnetic letter, a small whiteboard, and a different colored marker in each chair. Play musical chairs. When the music stops, tell the children to find the closest chair and write the letter on the whiteboard. LD 6 b
- Place 3-4 logos from favorite local restaurants, e.g., McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Wendy's, etc.) across the top of chart paper. Invite children to write their names under all the places where they like to eat. LD 6 b

- Obtain a cardboard pizza box from a local restaurant. Paint a crust and sauce on an inexpensive metal pizza pan. Place the pan in the box along with a set of magnetic letters, order forms, and a pencil. Ask children to write orders and create name, word, or letter pizzas. "I'll have an extra-large with T-I-M-M-Y or S-P-I-D-E-R-M-A-N on it, please!" LD 6 c

For more small group activities visit <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Prek/Planning.aspx> and click on P.R.I.D.E. (Pre-K Resource and Idea Exchange) within the top paragraph.

Happy writing!

